

NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES

February 14, 2019

City Council Chambers

212 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Attendees: Richard Parasiliti, Alisa Klein, Ashley Muspratt, Adin Maynard, Ben Weil, Wayne Feiden

Facilitator: Chris Mason, Energy and Sustainability Officer

Scribe: Douglas Renick

Public Comment Period:

Sharon Moulton: The Better Buildings Workshop is a week from Saturday at the Hitchcock Center, 1-3, Quentin Zonderman, Darren Port, Jo Comerford. Chris will forward emails with details.

Jackie Balance, CAN: Green New Deal Earth Day Forum is on Earth Day, April 22 at Northampton High School, 6:30, Mayor Narkewicz, Senator Comerford, Representative Sabadosa, Community Action Director Clare Higgins, plus others, will be attending.

Joyce Rosenfeld, also of CAN working with Jackie. Working with businesses on an Earth Day celebration.

Gordon Meadows: is with a business development company in Amherst which builds large energy projects. He would like to join the NESC. Chris directed him to fill out an on-line application and send it to the Mayor's Office.

Review and Approve minutes of January 10, 2019 meeting:

Alisa Klein moved, Ben Weil seconded. Amendments suggested. Alisa accepted the friendly amendments. Ben seconded. Approved unanimously.

Climate Resiliency and Regeneration Plan:

We are in the waiting period. All the material is in the consultants' hands. Put on next meeting's agenda.

Voting on IECC 2021:

The Planning Department has signed on as a government member. City Council is considering doing so. Chris is sending out guidance. USDN is preparing their own script. Ben Weil will help answer questions. MA is the heavy weight here and doing a lot. Others are involved nationally. The Mayor is looking at information and may join. We could have up to 4 members from four departments, i.e., 16 in total. Chris will explore the number. The Health Department and Fire Department may be interested. Alisa wants to know who wants to join. The City Council might step back.

Ordinance Relative to Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Arrays:

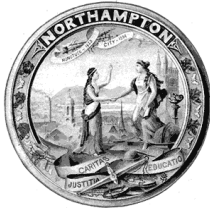
Background: 1 – The current ordinance was discussed by NESC a few years ago. State law says that if 25,000 board feet is cut, then the cut requires a permit. State is not enforcing this rule, creating a possible loophole. The question is how to address the loophole. 2 – Solar arrays can't be prohibited. They can be regulated. PV developers are involved. Accordingly, Zoning – can't prohibit arrays.

Voting Members:

Mary Biddle • William Dwight • Wayne Feiden • Louis Hasbrouck • Alisa Klein •
Adin Maynard • Ashley Muspratt • Richard Parasiliti • David Pomerantz • Tim Smith
• Ben Weil

Ex-officio, non voting:

Chris Mason



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Zoning has a look back ordinance. We don't allow arrays in a flood plain. Between the Planning Board and the City Council the issue seems to be covered well. NESC thoughts on this? Public Shade Tree Commission looking for the process to be slowed down for research and conversations with other towns who have dealt with this. There is an active group investigating this. Each permit should require a life cycle study about whether the project is carbon positive. Attorney Sewald: special permits would be helpful and consider health and safety issues. The public hearing has been kept open for two months. In Northampton you can lease rooftops for PV. That is a different market niche. NESC is interested in being kept informed. Put on the next agenda.

MA Achieving Zero Energy (MAZE) meeting:

Chris went to the kickoff meeting that NEEP held. Thirty people attended. Participants included: ~1/3 were not-for-profits, ~1/4 architects, ~1/4 were state government or regional agencies, both investor-owned electric utilities and two cities (Cambridge and Northampton). Chris wants to be involved as a representative from WM and as a representative from a Green Community. He'll bring a report of meetings and get The Commission's reactions. Chris's participation was affirmed. Chris's contributions at the MAZE meeting came largely from the NESC's January discussion. NESC comment: While the best way to get to net zero energy is to significantly drive down demand, the cost of achieving a Passive house performance is high. Some middle road may be needed. From the MAZE meeting: The definition of net zero is an open question at this time and it is problematic. Both rural Northampton and urban Cambridge concur that net-zero should not be based on on-site energy production. Rural N'ton due to the benefit of tree cover and flexibility in building siting and urban Cambridge because there is simply not enough roof space for multi-story buildings.

Adjournment: Wayne Feiden moved for adjournment and Ashley Muspratt seconded. Approved unanimously.

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